

When I was younger, I used to think I ruled the world, I was the centre of the universe, and I was basically —everything. Back then, it seemed apparent to the immature me that I was irreplaceable. I thought the world was made for me alone. I often wondered what would happen to the world if I left. This notion engulfed me. Only as I grew older did I reckon my logic was improbably flawed. I began to realize my limitations. There was a whole lot more to life than just me and me alone. Yet even so, this concept has helped shape one of my firm beliefs today, one that I believe with all my heart, to *live for yourself*.

As I mentioned earlier, I once thought that I was the nub of it all. Thus I expected everyone to listen to me, at my beck and call. Alas! Fate just has its way of circling around on you. Things didn't go the way I wanted. People weren't falling at my feet, liking me the way I wanted them to. So I thought, if people did not want to please me, I would please them. I turned myself into a clown to be ridiculed, poked fun at. Each day, my own happiness seemed to hinge on a smile from others, that to me a sign of approval. Even when I was low-spirited, I still had to plaster a smile on my face, to upkeep my reputation of 'comic entertainer'. I could not show anyone the downcast, melancholic side of me. Till then, I had lived my life solely to provide free entertainment, minus the popcorn.

But that was too tiring. I found myself falling apart, whittled away, bit by bit. That was when I saw the need to change. I had to start living for myself. And when I finally managed to, instantly, I felt liberated. The skies cleared. The world became brighter. I smiled whenever I wanted, laughed whenever I felt like it, cried whenever I was sad, without having to care a hoot about what others thought. I was a true sentient being.

In retrospect, it was extremely foolish of me to bind myself to those mental shackles that fettered me from enjoying life to the fullest, that nearly thrust me to the depths of depression. Though I have yet to figure out the true meaning of life, what I know is that we only have one shot at life, and once you miss it, it's gone. It was inane for me to try so hard to be someone I was not just so I could please others. There's bound to be someone disappointed no matter what, and eventually what really matters is that I stay true to myself. I am who I am, and nobody will ever change that fact.

With that, I pledge to live for myself, because there is really no one more worth living for.

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